

P - Branfman, Fred  
P - Cohn, Steve

# THE CIA: A VISIBLE GOVERNMENT IN INDOCHINA

Fred Branfman and Steve Cohn  
New York, N.Y.

CIAU-Laos

CIA 4.010 Operation Phoe

CIA 1.01 Helms, Richard

CIA 2.01.1

CIA 1.04 Marchetti, Victor

"The CIA may or may not be an invisible government here at home ... but to those close to the war it is one of the most visible - and important - governments in Indo-China today."

SOC 4.01.2 The Rope Dancer

CIA 1.03 Colby, William

Original under Branfman

As American soldiers are withdrawn from Indochina, the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) is increasing. The C.I.A. may or may not be an invisible government here at home. But to those close to the war, it is one of the most visible - and important - governments in Indochina today.

## CIA Secret Army

As we shall explain further in weeks to come, the C.I.A.'s budget in Laos and Cambodia exceeds those of the Laotian and Cambodian Governments by 20 or 30 to 1; the C.I.A. recruits, supplies, and directs a polyglot "Secret Army" of 100,000 men that does most of the front-line fighting in these two nations; C.I.A. photo interpreters and intelligence operatives control targetting, the most important part of the air war; C.I.A. political operatives are the main day-to-day intermediaries between the U.S. Government and local Lao and Cambodian politicians and generals.

And, of course, normal espionage, sabotage, assassination, and extortion - the C.I.A.'s standard fare anywhere - continue as usual (see Pentagon Papers memos No. 15 and No. 22 for Colonel Lansdale's descriptions of such activities as long as 10 and 20 years ago.)

In South Viet Nam, the C.I.A. role is also rising. The "pacification" program has taken on greater importance under Richard Nixon, and this of course is under the direct control of the C.I.A. through the deputy ambassador for pacification, always a C.I.A. man.

## Phoenix Project

The key aspect of pacification is the Phoenix Project, an admitted program of murder and torture of civilians suspected to be working for the National Liberation Front. Since Phoenix's inception, it openly admitted that the C.I.A. has killed and abducted more civilians than even the U.S. Government claims have been similarly mistreated by "Viet Cong terrorists" (see accompanying chart).

In discussing the role of the C.I.A. in Indochina today, let us note at the outset that this is not an aberration: the C.I.A. devotes most of its budget

(Reprinted from the American Report: Review of Religion and American Power, Vol. 2, No. 11, Dec. 10, 1971, published by Clergy and Laymen Concerned, a non-profit national committee, 637 West 125 St., New York, N.Y. 10027)

and personnel to waging political and military warfare in all corners of the globe, with only a small percentage going into strict intelligence-gathering.

## Carefully Cultivated Myth

This is not generally known, of course, for one of the most carefully cultivated myths in America today is that the C.I.A.'s main job is to prepare intelligence estimates for the President - the only job it is legally mandated to perform.

Whether in a recent Newsweek cover story on C.I.A. chief Richard Helms, or in a speech by Helms himself to an association of newspaper editors earlier this year, the theme is constantly repeated that the C.I.A.'s major role is merely to provide estimates of things such as Russian missile strength or morale in North Viet Nam.

In fact, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Highly informed sources reveal that of 18,000 people employed directly by the C.I.A. today, no more than 2,000 are actually involved in intelligence gathering and analysis. The vast majority are engaged in C.I.A. covert operations stretching from Bolivia to the Congo to Iran to Viet Nam.

## Four Major Divisions

The C.I.A. is divided into four major divisions:

- (1) The DIRECTORATE OF PLANS (cover name for the division of covert operations or clandestine services) - 6,000 people;
- (2) The DIRECTORATE OF SUPPORT (the division providing logistics support to the Directorate of Plans) - 6,000 people;
- (3) The DIRECTORATE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY - 4,000 people;
- (4) The DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE - 2,000 people.

Thus fully two thirds of the C.I.A.'s direct-hire employees - and a far higher percentage of its estimated two- to six-billion dollar budget - go to waging political and/or military warfare.